



Nebraska State Accountability

**Grade 8
Reading
Mini-Test**

Name:

Directions:

On the following page is a passage and multiple-choice questions for Grade 8 Reading Mini-Test, a practice opportunity for the *Nebraska State Accountability (NeSA)*.

Each question will ask you to select an answer from among four choices.

For all questions:

- Read the passage. Then answer each question carefully by choosing the best answer.
- Mark your answers for ALL of the questions.

Remember only one of the choices provided is the correct answer.

The Things People Put on Their Feet

Shoes—we wear them nearly every day. We walk, run, jump, climb, and stand in them for hours on end. Yet we hardly think about them because they are such an ordinary part of our daily lives.

Shoes were not always an important part of people's wardrobes. The ancient Greeks, Egyptians, and Persians made and wore sandals but went barefoot most of the time. These people lived in regions where the weather was temperate, and shoes were not needed to keep their feet warm. Archaeologists have found shoes in the ruins of these civilizations, but they seem to have been worn mainly by royalty, who could afford to employ tailors and shoemakers.

Sandals Were In

As shoes became more common in ancient Egypt, the first ones were simple sandals that were created mainly to protect the soles of the feet from rough surfaces. The easiest way to make shoes in these ancient times was to use materials that were handy. These included tree bark, leaves, and grasses. In ancient Egypt, sandals were made of rushes, grassy plants with hollow stalks. To this day, rushes are used to make chair bottoms, mats, and baskets.

Among the ancient Greeks, sandals were woven of similar plant materials, but the Greeks also made sandals by tying small pieces of wood together with dried grass. In later years, they made sandals with leather from the hides of animals. The first shoes were purely functional, but over time most shoes were dyed and decorated to make fashion statements. Women began to wear soft, enclosed leather shoes, and these grew increasingly fancy in the later years of the Greek civilization.

The Romans wore sandals much like the Greeks did but used more pieces of leather to make them. Some Roman sandals had straps that wrapped around the ankles. Shoemakers often dyed these sandals in bright colors that represented the different jobs held by the people wearing them. The patricians, or privileged classes, wore red sandals with moon-shaped ornaments on the back. Senators wore brown shoes with four black leather straps wound around the lower leg. Consuls, or legal officers, wore white shoes, and soldiers wore heavy leather sandals that were more like boots—but with bare toes!

Meanwhile, people who lived in cold northern climates were making their shoes from the hides of furry animals, such as polar bears and yaks. The soles and tops of these shoes were made from pieces of soft leather sewn together. This type of shoe—whether or not it used fur—was called a moccasin. Some Native American groups made and wore moccasins for thousands of years. Some moccasins were plain, and others were adorned with beadwork.

The Shoemaking Process

As the centuries passed, the primary material for shoes continued to be leather, and the process of making shoes did not change much. A wood and metal framework called a "last" was wrapped with pieces of leather that were then sewn together. As late as the mid-1800s, lasts were straight on both sides; this meant that there was no difference in shape between left and right shoes. It also meant that shoes were uncomfortable and that breaking them in was not easy. The lasts were made in different sizes, but for a long time only two widths were available—thin and stout.

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For centuries, shoes were sewn by hand, just as they had been by the ancient Egyptians. Machines to assist shoemakers were not used until the rolling machine was invented in 1845. This device was used to pound pieces of leather into thin strips. About the same time, Elias Howe invented the sewing machine, and pieces of shoe leather could now be sewn together more quickly. Another inventor, Lyman Reed Blake, created a machine for sewing the soles of shoes to the upper parts. Because shoes could be made faster and more cheaply, people who had never owned shoes before could now afford to buy and wear them.

New Trends, Materials, and Designs

In Europe and North America during the seventeenth century, most people wore boots because they were practical. Even in many large cities, dirt roads were common, and people had to walk along muddy pathways and across streams. By the eighteenth century, however, more city streets were paved with cobblestones, and it was easier to keep shoes clean. Shoes became more decorative, and fancy buckles of gold and silver were often used. Most shoes worn in the United States throughout the nineteenth century were patterned after European styles.

The major change in shoes over the last century has been the use of materials other than leather. Humphrey O'Sullivan invented the first rubber heel for shoes in 1898. Rubber heels were popular because they lasted much longer than heels made of leather. The use of rubber soles came next. The first rubber-soled shoes were called plimsolls, and they were manufactured in the United States in the late 1800s.

The first American nonleather shoes were invented in 1917. The upper material was made of a flexible canvas. These were the first "sneakers," a word that was used because the rubber sole made the shoe very quiet, unlike most leather shoes, which often squeaked when people walked.

Many people today choose athletic shoes for casual wear, but not until the late 1970s were shoes designed with amateur athletes in mind. Shoes made of rubber and canvas were worn by tennis, volleyball, and basketball players. By the 1980s, companies began to design athletic shoes for specific sports to help athletes perform better while protecting their feet and providing comfort.

Shoes have come a long way since the ancient Egyptians. Many more types of materials are used, and shoes have never been more comfortable or supportive for feet. Even so, it is interesting that the basic sandal, worn by people more than four thousand years ago, is still worn today and has not changed much over the years.

1. "Some moccasins were plain, and others were adorned with beadwork." What type of context clue is used to help you define the word adorned?
 - A. antonym
 - B. synonym
 - C. example
 - D. explanation

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2. Which of the following is an example of personification?
 - A. nonleather shoes
 - B. fancy buckles of gold
 - C. paved with cobblestone
 - D. squeaked when people walked

3. What is the author's purpose in writing this passage?
 - A. to inform the reader about the history of moccasins
 - B. to inform the reader about Ancient Greeks
 - C. to inform the reader about the history of shoes
 - D. to inform the reader about the first sneaker

4. What event happened first in the history of shoes?
 - A. the making and wearing of sandals
 - B. the making and wearing of moccasins
 - C. the making and wearing of boots
 - D. the making and wearing of sneakers

5. Which is the correct analogy?
 - A. Thin is to stout as skinny is to long.
 - B. Thin is to stout as narrow is to wide.
 - C. Thin is to stout as short is to thin.
 - D. Thin is to stout as tall is to fat.

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6. Based on the text, what can you assume about someone in the Roman civilization wearing red shoes?
- A. The person is a legal officer.
 - B. The person is poor.
 - C. The person is a politician.
 - D. The person is rich.
7. What is ironic about the development of what we wear on our feet?
- A. The first non-leather shoes called "sneakers" were quiet and did not squeak when people walked.
 - B. The basic shoe making process hasn't changed for centuries and the same materials to construct shoes are the same.
 - C. The basic sandal worn more than four thousand years ago hasn't changed much and is still worn today.
 - D. The style of shoes made long ago was more comfortable and of better quality than shoes made today.

Grade 8 Mini-Test Answers

1. A. antonym
2. D. squeaked when people walked
3. C. to inform the reader about the history of shoes
4. A. the making and wearing of sandals
5. B. Thin is to stout as narrow is to wide.
6. D. The person is rich.
7. B. The basic sandal worn more than four thousand years ago hasn't changed much and is still worn today.